

Panama: Broad Accord On Canal Area Land Use

by Steven Margolin

Preservation of the Panama Canal watershed, the Metropolitan Nature Park and the Camino de Cruces National Park are among the governing principles for land use in the Panama Canal area incorporated in a new broad accord on land use and regional planning.

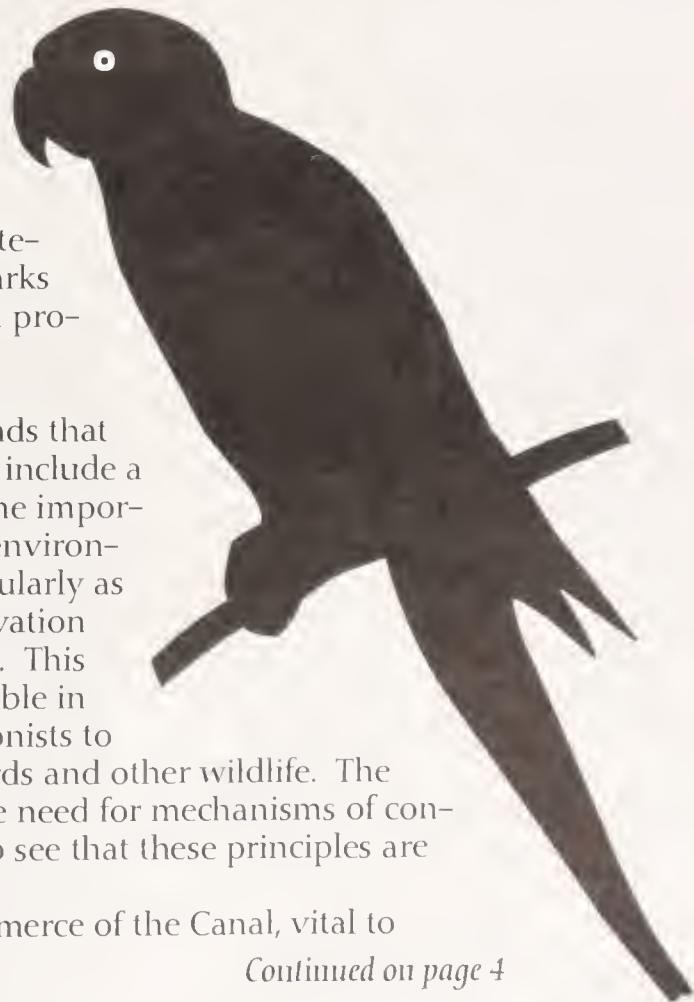
Under the auspices of the United Nations, representatives of the Panamanian national government, native peoples, political parties, the press and business groups, as well as labor, social, religious, academic and environmental organizations met for three days in September to review the proposed Regional Plan for the Development of the Interoceanic Region, the General Plan for Land Use, Conservation and Development of the Canal Zone and the

proposed legislation to approve those plans. The consensual result was a statement of recommendations to improve the proposed legislation, including statements concerning the parks and habitat preservation promoted by the Panama Audubon Society.

The accord recommends that the proposed legislation include a preamble recognizing the importance of ecological and environmental principles, particularly as they relate to the preservation of the Canal's watershed. This may prove to be invaluable in the efforts of conservationists to protect the habitat of birds and other wildlife. The agreement also notes the need for mechanisms of control and responsibility to see that these principles are observed.

Additionally, the commerce of the Canal, vital to

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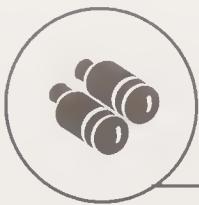


Are Your Birds Hungry?

If your finches, sparrows, pine siskins and juncos are all looking sad because your feeder is empty, we have the answer! The Golden Gate Audubon office has a full range of bird seed and feeders available for purchase. Come on down and get some seed ... but please call first, at (510) 843-2222, the office is not always open (Arthur goes to lots of meetings).

We gave the wrong prices for our sunflower seed in the September issue. Our 25 lb. bag of black oil sunflower seed sells for \$15.00 + tax and our 50 lb. bag sells for \$27.00 + tax.





Observations

by Hugh Cotter

September 6 to September 27

Fall is certainly upon us, and the challenge of this column this time of year becomes what to leave out, rather than what to include. So far, it certainly has been a quieter season than in previous years. Seabird numbers have been down from last month. Interest-ing shorebirds continue to be seen, but their numbers moving through our area have been tapering off. By the end of this period raptor migration seems to be in full swing with good movement being reported from traditional hawk-watching spots such as "Hawk Hill" in the Marin Headlands. Again during this month, there has been strong migration of western species, albeit with some notable scarcities, such as Golden-crowned Kinglets and Yellow-Rumped Warblers.

Albatrosses to Raptors

Although offshore sightings of whales and other marine mammals indicate a good food supply, seabird numbers have not been high this month. Albatross numbers are way down from last month's record highs. The high total for Black-footed Albatross was 11 birds on Monterey Bay (DLSH) while there were no Laysan Albatross reported. Flesh-footed Shearwater also have been scarce; three birds on a Cordell Bank trip, SON, were the only multiple report (DLSH). The largest shearwater concentrations offshore were of Buller's Shearwaters, including a total of 3,000 birds reported on a half-day pelagic trip to the Cordell Banks, Sept. 22 (DN). Two **Manx Shearwaters** were observed on Sept. 21 on a trip to the Sur Canyon

(JB). In addition, an adult **Red-tailed Tropicbird** was observed as it was harassed by Peregrines on the SEFI on Sept 11, when it subsequently bid a hasty retreat toward the Marin coast (KH per PP). A booby sp. was reported from Humboldt Bay, HUM, Sept 20, and unfortunately was not seen again.

A **Tri-colored Heron** found Sept 17 at Bodega Bay, SON (DN) remains at the time of this writing. This is the first record of this species in Northern California in several years and only the third Northern California record. The previous two were in Lassen and Sonoma counties. A Eurasian Wigeon was reported at Bolinas, MRN, Sept 23 (KH), while a Harlequin Duck remained through this month in Monterey. A female Hooded Merganser reported Sept 25 from Sunnyvale was somewhat early.

Again this month, a plover species provided one of the highlights: a report of a **Common Ringed Plover** at Point Reyes, Sept. 9 (RS). An extremely difficult ID, this plover, almost identical to Semipalmated Plover, was seen with a small flock of Killdeer for about 10 minutes before it flew off, not to be subsequently seen. Although all of the critical ID features were observed, the bird was unfortunately not photographed but likely will be submitted to the CRBC for review. The Common Ringed Plover is a rare but regular migrant and rare breeder in Alaska, but there is not yet an accepted record in the lower 48 states. Pacific Golden-Plovers continued at the Spaletta Plateau, PRNS, with a high total of 11 birds, with up to 2

American Golden-Plovers also present. Additional scattered single Pacific and American Golden-Plovers were also reported from Sonoma, Humboldt, Yolo and San Mateo counties (mob). A Stilt Sandpiper was at the Mountainview Forebay, SCL, on Sept 25/26, with 2 birds present there on the 27th (LC). Other notable shorebirds included 6 reports of Ruff and 4 reports of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper from various coastal locations (mob). Only two reports of Buff-breasted Sandpipers, in Hayward, ALA, Sept 22 (BR) and in Humboldt, Sept 27 (JS), counties, indicate the increasing scarcity of the species over the last few years.

A Cordell Bank Pelagic trip Sept 15 recorded a "jaeger fest", with 21 Long-tailed Jaegers, in addition to the more expected Pomarine and Parasitic Jaegers, and also tallied 6 South Polar Skua (DLSH).

By the month's end, good movements of Raptors were being seen from "Hawk Hill" in Marin County, in addition to the first substantial movement of Broad Winged Hawks, (11-12 birds in one day).

Cuckoos to Vireos

A sometimes difficult and elusive **Black-billed Cuckoo** was found near Ferndale, HUM, on Sept 19 and continued to be seen up until the 22nd (BC). An immature bird, in addition to being the third county record for Humboldt, this is one of the few recent records in Northern California for this species. Six Tropical Kingbirds were also noted, while three Eastern Kingbirds were reported, all of them in Marin

County. "Western" and Willow Flycatchers proved numerous during this period, with scattered reports of Dusky and Hammond's Flycatchers from various coastal locations. Three Least Flycatchers were reported: one on the SE Farallones, another at PRNS, and one from Contra Costa County, the first record for that county (SG).

A Northern Wheatear was on private property in Healdsburg, SON on Sept 22 (DN). This species remains an exceptionally rare vagrant in California, and follows up on the two records from this time last year.

A Gray Catbird, continuing on the good year to date for this species, was at the Fish Docks, PRNS, Sept 20, and remains as of this writing. A Sage Thrasher at the Point Reyes Lighthouse on Sept 9 (GT) was an interesting coastal record for this species.

Another California rarity, Black-backed Wagtails, were found twice this month. An adult was present at Crescent City, DNC, on Sept 22 (AB) and another was found near Fort Bragg, MEN, Sept. 27 (JW). The latter remained at least through Sept 29. Speculation mounted as to the possibility that the Crescent City bird could have been the same one that overwintered in Orange County this past winter. Within days of the report at Crescent City, a wagtail returned to the same location in Orange County.

The vireo family was well represented this period with **Yellow-throated Vireos** at Fort Bragg, MEN, on Sept 13, (CV, JW) – the first county record – and in Humboldt on Sept 27 (JS). Two Solitary Vireos

of the eastern "blue-headed" race were also reported and a **Yellow-green Vireo** was seen and banded at Andrew Molera State Park, MTY on Sept 22-25, (JB). In addition, three Red-eyed Vireos were reported, and a Philadelphia Vireo was in San Francisco, Sept 22-23 (TK).

Warblers to Orioles

It was once again a good month for common and "western" warbler species, particularly Townsend's and Yellows, which seemed to be everywhere. However, Yellow-rumped Warblers seemed slow in arriving this year, with only very small flocks being noted. There also have been fewer of the "traditional" irregular species reported than in previous years. All this said, there certainly have been some good birds, beginning with a

Prothonotary Warbler on Bodega Head, SON (SC, DN), first seen Sept 8 and what was probably the same bird on Sept 13, and a **Blue-winged Warbler** reported in Sacramento, on Sept 15 (per TEa) the first record in several years in Northern California.

A total of 4 Virginias Warblers were reported; a Lucy's Warbler was at AMSP, Sept 24 (JB), while a male Black-throated Blue Warbler was in San Francisco, Sept 16 (AH). In addition, there were 4 Chestnut-sided Warblers reported, a female Magnolia Warbler at Bodega, while a Black-throated Green Warbler was on the SEFI early in the month. Four Prairie Warblers, a total of 10 Blackpolls, and a Mourning Warbler were reported, the latter at the AMSP, MTY, on Sept 23 (JB).

Three Canada Warblers was a

The monthly *Observation* column is generated from reports made to the Northern California Bird Box or to the author. Some sightings are unconfirmed and numbers of birds are often best regarded as estimates or "best guesses" In general, birds in boldface are very rare in our region, geographically or seasonally. Many of these are currently reviewed by the California Bird Records Committee (CBRC). Observers are encouraged to provide written and/or photographic documentation to the CBRC, c/o Michael Patten, P.O. Box 51959, Riverside, CA 92517-2959 for any species currently on the review list. A list of review species can also be obtained from the CBRC secretary at the address above. This data is made possible by all the observers who contributed their reports to the Northern California Bird Box. If anybody has photos of birds reported in this column and would be interested in letting us post them on our web site we would be very appreciative. Please feel free to contact me to discuss.

Abbreviations for Observers: AB; Alan Barron, JB; Jim Booker, BC; Brian Carris, LC; Les Chibana, SC; Suzanne Cogan, TEa; Todd Easterla, SG; Steve Glover, KII; Keith Hansen, AH; Alan Hopkins, TK; Ted Koundakjian, DN, Dan Nelson, PP; Peter Pyle, BR; Bob Reiling, DLSh, Debra Love Shearwater, RS; Rich Stallcup, JS; John Sterling, GT; Gil Thompson, RST; Ron Thorn, CV; Chuck Vaughan, JW; Jerry White.

Abbreviations for counties: ALA, Alameda; CC, Contra Costa; HUM, Humboldt; MRN, Marin; MEN, Mendocino; MTY, Monterey; SF, San Francisco; SJ, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SCL, Santa Clara; SON, Sonoma; YOL, Yolo.

Other abbreviations used: AMSP; Andrew Molera State Park, Monterey, PRNS- Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin; SEFI, South East Farallon Islands, San Francisco.

good total for this species in our area, and while rounding out the rest of the species were 9 Northern Waterthrush and scattered American Redstart reports from various coastal counties.

Reports of single Clay-colored Sparrow and Brewer's Sparrows came from various locations while a Black-throated Sparrow at AMSP, MTY, on Sept. 4 (JB) was interesting.

The first Lapland Longspur of the season was reported from Humboldt on Sept 27 (JS). Let us hope we have a repeat of last year's longspur season. Finally, Orchard Orioles were found at various coastal locations, with six birds reported.

Panama Field Trip

Continued from page 1

Panama's business economy, would be severely undermined if destruction of forests in the watershed altered the patterns of rainfall and freshwater runoff, or increased erosion and sedimentation.

Panama Audubon Society has fought for more than a year now to preserve the Metropolitan Nature Park, a natural tropical forest in Panama City, from destructive road building and government interference with the management of the Park by its trustees. Thus, the accord's call for the Park's trustees to update its management plan in compliance with the law establishing the Park as a natural preserve is a significant show of support for Panama Audubon Society's position.

The accord also calls upon the Panamanian national government to maintain pressure on our national government to fulfill our obligations under the 1977 Panama Canal Treaty to clean up areas contaminated during the period of U.S. control of the Canal Zone.

See Panama For Yourself In February

Join our birding trip to Panama, scheduled for February 15 through March 2, 1997, see some great birds, visit important neotropical bird areas and meet members of Panama Audubon! The first week will focus on the Canal Zone (lots of rainforest species) and the Western



PHOTO BY TOM HENRY

Give Credit Where Credit is Due

The Gull would like to send an apology to Tom Henry for failing to give him his well-deserved credit on the wonderful photos that accompanied the October issue's article on the Great Blue Herons and tree collars at Stow Lake. We would also like to take this opportunity to remind everyone else that Tom, a nature photographer and San Francisco Bay Bird Observatory (SFBBO) member will be co-

hosting a slide presentation about the herons at Stow Lake with Nancy DeStefanis, San Francisco's site coordinator for the Colonial Waterbird Monitoring Program of the SFBBO.

The presentation will be held at the Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco, Thursday December 5 at 7:30 p.m. Admission will be free.

Highlands (Resplendent Quetzal, cotingas and other neat stuff). The second week will bring us to Cana and Cerro Pirre, in the remote Darien, enjoying the birds of the foothills and the cloud forest.

Come with us for both weeks

or either one. Act now, while space is still available. Contact Top Guides, 1825 San Lorenzo Avenue, Berkeley 94707 (telephone 800-867-6777 or e-mail to top4adven@aol.com), or call our GGAS Panama Committee chair, Miles McKey, at 510-652-5854.

Christmas Bird Counts

by Clyde Morris & Joelle Buffa

4 Calling Birds, 3 French Hens, 2 Turtle Doves And A Partridge In A Pear Tree!

Yes, you guessed it, it's almost time again for the Christmas Bird Counts! GGAS sponsors two counts: one in Oakland on Sunday, December 22, and one in San Francisco on Friday, December 27. Mark your calendars now!



Christmas Bird Counts are day-long events where Audubon members and non-members join together in teams to search for, identify and count as many birds as possible within a 15-mile diameter circle. Teams are formed with birders of varying skills. Many an avid birder has



had his/her first birding experience as a member of a Christmas Bird Count team. We cover fields,



shorelines, suburbs and mountain trails or spend time watching feeders at home to collect evidence of wintering birds. All of this work is followed by an informal dinner (cheap and good food) where we tally the day's counts.



Last year, nearly 1,700 Christmas Bird Counts were conducted all over North America, Central America, South America, the Caribbean, Hawaii and several Pacific Islands. The counts' results are carefully tabulated and submitted to the National Audubon Society to become available to researchers studying bird distribution and population trends.

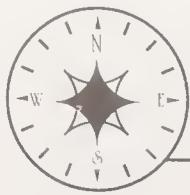
Notices with sign-up details will be mailed in early November

to all those who have participated in the past three years. If you do not receive your notice or have not participated and would like to be added to the list, please call the GGAS office at (510) 843-2222.

We Are Experiencing Technical Difficulties, Please Stand By

As you know, there have been a lot of changes here at The Gull in the past few months. Unfortunately, efficiency and perfection are not often travel companions with change, but rather choose to arrive a bit later. And speaking of 'arriving later', that brings me to the point: the delay in your receiving the newsletter.

Having a new editor, a new designer, a new layout, new schedules and new deadlines, plus printing delays and trying to make everything fit into the puzzle has resulted in the newsletter arriving late. We apologize for the inconvenience and are constantly at work to iron out these rough spots. Just like red wine though, we're sure to get better with time (only more quickly).



Field Trips Calendar

GAS field trips are conducted by experienced birders who wish to share their knowledge and love of birds with others. All trips are free of charge (except for entrance fees that may be charged by regional, state, or national parks) and are open to everyone, regardless of membership in the National Audubon Society or Golden Gate chapter.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 13 (NOTE: WRONG DATE IN THE OCTOBER GULL)

Mini-trip to Aquatic Park, Berkeley, and other nearby areas

Meet at 9:30 a.m. in the northwest corner of Spenger's Restaurant parking lot (4th and Hearst St.) to carpool. We should see returning shorebirds and migratory ducks. Lunch optional. Rain cancels trip. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17 HAYWARD REGIONAL SHORELINE

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the parking area beyond the gate at the end of West Winton Ave. in Hayward for about four hours of birding. This location is alive with shorebirds, ducks and grebes. There are also grassland species to be seen. Dress warmly and bring a scope if you have one. Lunch is optional. Leader: David George (510) 339-6848 (*)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 24 ARROWHEAD MARSH, SAN LEANDRO CREEK

Meet at 9:00 a.m. for this half-day trip. Take Hwy. 880 to the Hegenberger Road exit. Drive west about one-half mile toward the Oakland Airport. Pass Leet Drive and meet in the small parking lot on the right just beyond the creek. We will be looking for waterfowl and shorebirds.

Beginners and children are especially welcome. They will provide other birders an opportunity to share their knowledge. Rain cancels. Leader: Jeffrey Black (510) 526-7068 (*)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 7 MONTEREY BAY AND COASTAL AREAS

Meet at 9:00 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of the Coast Guard Pier. Bring quarters for parking. We will bird this area, then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, alcids, and rocky coastline species. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks (408) 266-2969 (eve.) (*)

SATURDAY AND SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7 & 8 GRAY LODGE AND SACRAMENTO WILDLIFE REFUGES

For this two-day trip, meet on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. in lot #14 at Gray Lodge. Drive east on I-80 15 miles beyond Davis to Route 99 exit. Go north 52 miles on Route 99 to the town of Gridley. Turn left (west) on Colusa Hwy. and



continue five miles to Pennington Road. Turn left and follow signs to Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. Proceed through the checking station (entrance fee) and continue to parking lot #14. We will caravan through Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge on Saturday and through the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge on Sunday.

On Sunday, we will meet at 9:00 a.m. in the visitors' parking lot at the Sacramento Wildlife Refuge. To get there from I-5 take the Norman Rd. exit (just north of the Glenn Co. line), and follow signs to the refuge. We will be looking for migrating geese (four species), a variety of ducks, raptors and Sandhill Cranes.

Allow two and one-half hours driving time from the Bay Area. (AAA map of Sacramento Valley Region is helpful.) For accommodations, the Blue Gum Willows Motel off I-5 at Willows (916) 934-5401 is suggested (there is no lodge at Gray Lodge), and camping is possible at the State Park in Colusa. Bring lunch, scopes, and clothes appropriate for the valley in December (chilly). Heavy rain cancels trip. Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin (510) 654-6295 (\$)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 11 MINI-TRIP TO LAKE MERRITT, OAKLAND

Meet at the Rotary Science Center at 9:30 a.m. Go east on Grand Avenue, cross Harrison St. and turn right on Bellevue Ave. to Lake Merritt. Continue to the

It's Nice to be Recognized

The work that every one of us as a member of GGAS does is not done for praise, and our passions and energies are not spent selfishly, but all in all, it is still nice to receive a pat on the back now and then. In a recent letter from the National Audubon Society Chapters of California Office we were recognized for all our efforts and achievements:

Thank you for the outstanding work that the chapter continues to perform on behalf of the Audubon Cause. The Golden Gate Audubon Society has made many significant contributions towards a quality natural environment over the years. The chapter is to be commended on the

broad scope of those contributions.

The chapter is also to be commended on its fine conservation work. The list of conservation activities that the chapter is engaged in is as exhaustive as it is exemplary. Taken together, it is quite an impressive list. We applaud the chapter's leadership on wetlands conservation in the Bay Area, California, and indeed across the nation.

We also applaud the chapter for its outstanding environmental education and outreach programs, enticing monthly meetings, an impressive field trip schedule, and admirable efforts in membership and publicity. The newsletter is also excellent..

Sincerely,
Jill Shirley, Director

Rotary Science Center (on the right - just beyond the duck pond.) This is a good opportunity to review waterfowl. Rain cancels. Leaders: Anna Wilcox (510) 351-9301 and Jean-Marie Spoelman

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14 A DUCK WALK AT PALO ALTO BAYLANDS

We should score a dozen ducks, and perhaps - with luck - score a score of ducks. We live here year round, but many ducks are only here for the mild winter. We should also add a dozen shorebirds and numerous songbirds, perhaps even a kite or a rail. Expect the Lesser Scaup, two teal, two goldeneye, Canvasbacks, Gadwall, shovelers, Canada geese, White Pelicans and more. We'll

bird the southern Bay shore. Heavy rain cancels. Expect cool and wet weather. Bring lunch. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the round cement duck pond, Palo Alto Baylands, east end of Embarcadero (east of P. A. Airport). Call (415) 668-8229 for details and carpooling. Leader: Harry Fuller

Trips marked with a (\$) go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

Carpooling arrangements will be attempted for trips marked with a (*). See below.

Problems, etc.: If you need a ride or can take a passenger, if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, or IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN LEADING A TRIP, call Lillian Fujii (510) 256-4167, Field Trips Committee Chairperson.

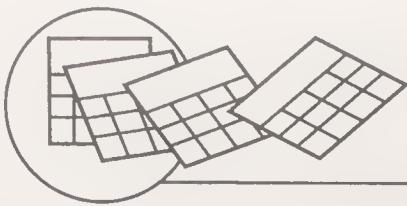
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Panama Audubon
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Robert Piper

The Society welcomes gifts in general or gifts in honor of or in memory of relatives and friends. Such gifts will be used as specified by the donor or, if unspecified, at the discretion of the GGAS Board of Directors. This includes their use of general GGAS activities or for special programs of the Society. Please send your gift in the form of a check made out to Golden Gate Audubon Society, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702. All gifts are tax deductible. The Society is also appreciative of any bequests. Such bequests should specify as recipient the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc. All gifts, donations and bequests will be acknowledged in The GULL, as well as personally on behalf of the Society by the Secretary.



November Meeting

Geography 101

You might think that the distribution of birds would be explained, in large part, by their capability to fly. However, when we look at the ranges of families of birds, we find that they are a better reflection of plate tectonics and continental land bridges rather than dispersal by flight.

Speaking on this very topic at our November meeting, Tim Krantz will present a geographical overview of the birds of the world, as represented by the distribution of avian families. Tim, senior associate ecologist for Livine-Frike, an environmental engineering firm that has designed tidal restoration projects at Oro Loma Marsh, Arrowhead Marsh, Pier 98, and other Bay Area wetlands, will start at the beginning – Archaeopteryx. He will then explore the biogeographical dispersal of bird families, from Gondwanaland and Laurasia to the convergent evolu-

tion of New World and Old World families. Finally, he will help us examine the true long distance dispersalists – the colonization of remote islands and the evolution of endemic species.

With a doctorate in geography from Berkeley, and botany and ornithology being his areas of expertise, Tim Krantz will definitely make this meeting both informative and fascinating. See you there! 

Thursday

November 14

7:30 p.m.

Northbrae Community Church

941 Alameda, Berkeley

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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